

CHAPTER TWO

THE DEVELOPMENT OF TELEVISION IN MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the recent years, the world witnesses fast paces of developing television broadcasting. However, Muslims do not cope with this development to utilize television for the dissemination of the Islamic message. The quality of Islamic television programs demonstrates no much development despite the rapid development of television broadcasting. This chapter identifies the basic premises of communication in Islam. It also highlights Islam and television at the early stage of introducing television as well as historical development of television in Muslim societies. Last, important characteristics, formats and sources of Islamic television programs are identified.

2.2 BASIC PREMISES OF COMMUNICATION IN ISLAM

According to Olayiwola (1993: 93) Islam is a communicative religion, and Allah (SWT) is a communicative God Who takes keen interest in the affairs of His creatures. Allah (SWT) creates human beings to interact and communicate with each other not to live independently. The noble Qur'an stresses on human communication in Surat al-Hujurat. Allah (SWT) says:

{يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِّن ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا}.

Which almost means: {O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another} (al-Qur'an, 49: 13).

The addressee in this verse is mankind not Muslims to indicate that communication is the normal state of all human beings.

Communication in Islam as a field of study has been much debated on. Much effort in this field is spent on human communication. Some scholars debate on divine communication and others on mass communication. Human communication in Islam should be based on ethical grounds that control the interaction of human beings and guarantee the well-being of the communities. Mowlana who a lecturer at International Communication School at American University, Washington (2007); discusses the fundamental principles of communication ethics. He states five cardinal concepts of the Islamic worldview of communication. *Tawhid* (oneness of Allah), *amr bi al-maruf wa nahi 'an al-munkar* (enjoining good and forbidding evil), *ummah* (nation), *taqwa* (fear of Allah) and *amanah* (trust) are the basic concepts of communication ethics.

The concept of *tawhid* represents the necessity of exclusive bondage to Allah (SWT). *Tawhid* also negates the right of sovereignty of anyone over human society except Allah (SWT). Negation of sovereignty of human beings over each other involves mutual respect because human beings are equal. The second concept, enjoining good and forbidding evil, is extracted from the noble Qur'an. It reveals that communication of Muslim society is meant to spread good and prevent evil. Allah (SWT) said:

{كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ}

Which almost means: {You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah} (al-Qur'an, 3: 110).

The importance of the third concept, community, lies in the international cooperation among all Muslims regardless of geographical and political boundaries. The concept of *taqwa* guards against unethical forces that affect human beings, and the importance of the last concept, *amanah*, is stressed in the great responsibility which almighty Allah (SWT) imposes on mankind (Mowlana, 2007: 31).

In addition, divine-human communication that represents communication of Allah (SWT) with human beings is also discussed by some Muslim researchers. Ibrahim (n.d.: 76-86) elaborates on divine-human communication models. He argues that Allah communicates with human beings through either inspiration, from behind a veil or sending a messenger to reveal. The models of divine-human communication are extracted from the noble Qur'an. Allah (SWT) says:

{وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا أَوْ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا فَيُوحِيَ بِإِذْنِهِ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ}.

Which almost means: {And it is not for any human being that Allah should speak to him except by revelation or from behind a partition or that He sends a messenger [i.e., angel] to reveal, by His permission, what He wills. Indeed, He is Most High and Wise.} (al-Qur'an, 42: 51).

The direction of these models is up to down because the communication is directed from Allah (SWT) to human beings, and human-divine communication directed the other way round also exists. Human-divine communication represents the relation of human beings with Allah (SWT). Mustafa Kanakir who was a senior lecturer at Islamic Science University of Malaysia and researcher in Islamic Broadcasting (2008: 20-22) argues that

to establish a strong relationship with Allah, human beings should have *silah* (connection) with Allah (SWT) and *ikhlas* (sincerity). The best way to establish this connection, he mentions, is *thikru Allah* (remembrance of Allah) (SWT).

2.2.1 Process of Communication

Muslim scholars of communication focus on the process of human communication. For example, Hamid (2007: 29) and Mahmud (2010: 44) argue that the process of communication includes five elements: sender, message, channel, receiver and feedback. Lunenburg (2010: 2) explains communication elements. He states that sender is the initiator of communication, and the receiver is the individual or party to whom the message is sent. The sender encodes the idea by selecting words, symbols, or gestures with which to compose a message. The message is the outcome of the encoding, which takes the form of verbal, nonverbal, or written language. The channel is the carrier of communication, and feedback occurs when the receiver responds to the sender's message and returns the message to the initiator.

Each element of communication process in Islam has its own features. First, Muslim sender, as an initiator of the message, is exhorted to be acquainted with three fields of knowledge: *Shari'ah*, communication and psychology (Mustafa Kanakir, 2008: 38) because these three fields are required for the wellbeing of disseminating the Islamic message. Muslim sender is differentiated by four characteristics. First, he is not only a broadcaster, but he is an inviter to Allah (SWT). Second, the Muslim sender is involved in and responsible for his message. He is concerned with audience to accept his message, Islam. Third, Muslim sender is a representative of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) because

he takes responsibility to achieve the same mission. Finally, Muslim sender is the disseminator of the message of Allah (SWT). Therefore, he bears in mind that his main reward is from Allah (SWT) (al-Din, 2010: 57). Muslim sender is also advised to acquire other characteristics such as being a model for his audience, having wisdom and patience.

Second, the Islamic message should be full of either *'ilm* (knowledge), wisdom or *tazkiah* (spirituality). Allah (SWT) clarifies that in the noble Qur'an by saying:

{رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ}

Which almost means: {Our Lord, and send among them a messenger from themselves who will recite to them Your verses and teach them the Book and wisdom and purify them. Indeed, You are the Exalted in Might, the Wise} (al-Qur'an, 2: 129).

Al-Din (2010: 62-63) argues that five main factors contribute to the success of communication. First, the communication message has to concern as big number of audience as possible. Second, it should be appropriate for medium or channel of communication. Third, the differences of audience should be considered. Fourth, the message should not contradict social customs. Fifth, the message should be characterised by simplicity, clarity, objectivity and truth.

Third, channels of communication are classified differently. Some researchers like Abu Ausba' (2004: 30-31) classify channels of communication to verbal and non-verbal according to types of communication. Others classify the channels to visual, audio and audiovisual. They are also classified into heard, seen and heard seen (Dlio, 2003: 71). However, other researchers classify Islamic communication channels differently.

According to Mustafa Kanakir (2003: 195) channels of Islamic communication are divided into traditional and modern. Traditional channels refer to means of communication that were used in the past and may still be used in the present time such as *Hajj*, sermons, lecture, poetry, *athan* (Islamic call to prayer) etc. Modern channels refer to news agencies, journals, cinema, radio, television and the Internet. Every channel should be chosen wisely to suite the message. The message broadcast in radio, for example, may not be suitable to be broadcast on television.

Fourth, the receiver of the Islamic message has both rights and duties in the process of communication. His right is to receive useful and understood messages that are appropriate to him, and his duty is to listen well to the message and follow the best of it. The receiver of the Islamic message is not only Muslims, but all human beings. Allah (SWT) certifies this meaning in the noble Qur'an by saying:

{قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا}

Which almost means: {Say, [O Muhammad], "O mankind, indeed I am the Messenger of Allah to you all} (al-Qur'an, 7: 158).

This verse confirms twice that the Islamic message is to Muslims and non-Muslims by choosing the word *al-nas* (mankind) and *jami'an* (all) to represent that the message of Allah (SWT) is unlimited.

Fifth, feedback is essential in the communication process because it helps determining whether the recipient has understood the message in the same terms as intended by the sender and whether he accepts that message. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was deeply concerned with feedback. He noticed that disbelievers responded to his messages

negatively even he used the best suitable ways of communication with them. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) became deeply sad, and Allah (SWT) consoled him in the noble Qur'an by saying:

{فَلَعَلَّكَ بَاقِعٌ نَفْسِكَ عَلَى آثَارِهِمْ إِنْ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَسَفًا}.

Which almost means: {Then perhaps you would kill yourself through grief over them, [O Muhammad], if they do not believe in this message, [and] out of sorrow} (al-Qur'an, 18: 6).

Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) concern of feedback made him change the format of the message according to his audience to obtain the best feedback. For example, some new Muslims like money so he gave them as means to obtain their hearts (Kahil, 1985: 54). Others like praise so he praised them in order to ensure positive feedback from his audience.

2.2.2 Levels of Communication

Scholars divide human communication into four main levels. Al-Musawi (n.d.), for example, states that the most important levels of communication are intrapersonal communication, interpersonal communication, group communication and mass communication. First, according to Khalaf (2011) *itisal thati* (intrapersonal communication) is a level of communication that takes place between a human being and himself. Mustafa Kanakir (2008: 36-46) argues that the Muslim communicator should obtain eight features of intrapersonal communication. They are: 1) knowledge and education, 2) modernity and update, 3) leadership, 4) knowing the state of audience, 5) patience, 6) truth, 7) courage and carefulness and 8) belief in what he calls for. These

characteristics qualify the communicator for the next level of communication, the interpersonal.

Second, according to Beebe et al (2002), interpersonal communication is defined as a distinctive form of human communication. It is defined not just by the number of people who communicate, but also by the quality of the communication. They (2002: 6) further state, “interpersonal communication occurs not when you simply interact with someone, but when you treat the other person as a unique human being”. Muslim communication writers focus on communication of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and focuses on the way that he communicated the message of Islam. Muslim communication researchers extract communication features that the Prophet (PBUH) had, and attempt to apply them to modern age. For example, Mustafa Kanakir (2003: 37-50) discusses that Muslim communicators should maintain six issues in the level of interpersonal communication to be able to achieve the mission of communicating the message of Islam. They are: 1) wisdom, 2) relation with governors, 3) role model, 4) respecting others, 5) mercy, kindness and gentleness and 6) forbearance. These characteristics are not only applied to human communication, but to mass communication too.

Third, group communication refers to the nature of communication that occurs in groups. Group communication is essential in Islam. *Khutbat al-Jumu'ah* (Friday sermon), one of group communication channels in Islam, is *fardh ain* (individual obligation). Even the last pillar of Islam *Hajj* is also considered one of group communication channels in Islam. Islam is not only concerned with groups, but with the entire Muslim nation and even in all human beings. Allah (SWT) said:

{وَاَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعاً وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا}.

Which almost means: {And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided} (al-Qur'an, 3: 103).

The concern of Islam in all human beings enjoins Muslims to make a step forward to exploit mass media to disseminate the message of Islam to all human beings.

Fourth, according to Obe (2008: 6) "mass communication is a means of disseminating information or message to large, anonymous, and scattered heterogeneous masses of receivers who may be far removed from the message sources through the use of sophisticated equipment. In other words, communication is the sending of message through a mass medium to a large number of people." The word 'masses' itself means people or the public. Mass communication can be interpreted in two ways: communication by mass media and communication to the masses. In this context mass communication is a useful medium for disseminating Islam. This meaning is narrated in the noble Qur'an. Allah (SWT) says:

{وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا كَافَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ}.

Which almost means: {And We have not sent you except comprehensively to mankind as a bringer of good tidings and a warner. But most of the people do not know} (al-Qur'an, 34: 28).

Obe states, (2008: 7) "One needs to underscore the underlying fact that what is common in every definition of mass communication anywhere in the world is that it is communicated through a mass medium. In other words, for any message to be regarded as

being mass communicated, it must be disseminated through a mass medium like Radio, Television, Newspaper and Magazine”.

Furthermore, communication in the modern age does not change from the Prophet's time. Changes of communication lie in the media only. The first word revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is *iqra'* (read) which is considered the first imperative assigned to the Prophet. It is commonly known that the Prophet (PBUH) is illiterate i.e. neither reads nor writes. Therefore, in this context *iqra* has further meaning beyond reading. It means to acquire knowledge (Noordin, 2009: 1). According to Ibn Kathir (1999: 437) knowledge can be acquired through mind, tongue and hand i.e. through writing, and the tool of writing is *qalam* (pen). Noordin states that:

“The function of the *Qalam* is to write, store, and disseminate information and knowledge. Nowadays, computers are used to write, store and disseminate information and knowledge. Thus, metaphorically, the Computer is the *Qalam* for this generation.” (2009: Preface).

Also stories narrated in the noble Qur'an are to communicate and educate human beings. The medium of communicating stories of the noble Qur'an at the age of the Prophet (PBUH) was narration. In the modern age, new medium of communicating stories is developed. Stories in the modern age are communicated through acting. Acting is presented on mass media like cinema, and television. Thus, mass media are apt to communicate the Islamic message.

In addition, Livesey (2011: 1) states, “Mass media, therefore, refer to channels of communication that involve transmitting information in some way, shape or form to large numbers of people”. Livesey (2011: 1) goes further to comment on television as a mass

medium which “is generally classified as ‘one-to-many’ communication - ‘one’ person (such as the author of a book, the creators of a television programme or a film director), communicates to many people (the audience) “at the same time” in a way that is largely impersonal”. According to Mu’awid (n.d.: 11) television is the most powerful communication channel that human beings have ever known because it combines both audio and visual portions. Obtaining such characteristics, television has to be the most exploited channel for communicating the message of Islam.

2.3 TELEVISION AND MUSLIMS

Davies, a noted British writer on Islam (1987: 168) stated in her study of broadcasting in the Muslim World “there should be a natural affinity between Muslims and the broadcast media”. This affinity is not strongly established yet. Davies (1987: 167) further states, “Muslims commentary on the media is a rhetorical extravaganza, full of sound and fury. To date, it has generated little by way of Muslim media to secure Muslim audiences; nor has it made serious inroads into the task of broadcasting about Islam to a general audience”. Television had undergone a long debate by Muslims and different opinions had established. Some Muslims consider television *haram* (forbidden) on account of its functioning nature, negative impact and programs. However, others consider it as a neutral medium that is suitable for conveying the message of Islam to the masses. The disunity of Muslims attitude toward television affects the utilization of television for the dissemination of the Islamic message.

Some researchers tend to forbid television because of its functioning nature, *al-tasweer* (photography). As a new medium invented by non-Muslims, television is misinterpreted

by some Muslim scholars. Misinterpretation of television is originally erupted from similar use of the Arabic word (*al-tasweer*). This word is narrated in some of Prophet Muhammad's hadiths (PBUH) to refer to idols and drawings that were worshiped beside Allah (SWT). For example, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) says:

«لَا تَدْخُلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ بَيْتًا فِيهِ كَلْبٌ، وَلَا صُورَةٌ تَمَاطِيلُ».

Which almost means: (Angels do not enter a house which has either a dog or an idol picture inside.) (Hadith, al-Bukhari. Kitab Bid' al-Khalq: Bab Ith Qala Ahadukm Amin Wa al-Mala'ikatu Fi al-Sama': Juz' 4).

The word *surah* in the hadith is a singular noun of the misinterpreted word *al-tasweer*. *Surah* in this hadith means picture. The last two words in the hadith *surah tamathil* refer to idols that were worshiped. At the Prophet's time worshiping idols was popular which requires strong emphasis on prohibitions on any relation to that whether a picture, an idol or whatever worshiped besides Allah (SWT).

In modern age, coincidentally the Arabic word *al-tasweer* is used to mean photography. The similarity of this word is limited to spelling, but does not imply the real meaning of Islamic ban. If another word had replaced this Arabic word, misinterpretation would have not occurred. This misinterpretation is mainly in Saudi Arabia because Muslims in Saudi Arabia focus on text more than the meaning in context. Boyd who is recognized internationally as a major contributor to knowledge about broadcasting in the Middle East, and considered as one of few scholarly researchers with wide-ranging experience and understanding of Arab media and Arab mass communication (1982: 129), states that this issue resolved when the King of Saudi Arabia gathered prominent Muslim scholars in

the kingdom and asked them about light whether it is good or bad, and their answer was good because light is created by Allah (SWT), and it is useful for His creatures. Another question was raised by the king. Is shadow good or bad? After negotiation the answer was good because it is inherent in light. The king said that it is solved then because *al-tasweer* is not but a combination of light and shadow. Having known the reality of television, Muslim scholars in Saudi Arabia change their minds of banning television. Thus, misinterpretation was because of ignorance of functioning nature of television.

Moreover, other researchers reject television because of its programs. Music and songs, female voice, romance, nudity and the like are frequent programs of television. Shakir (n.d.), for example, argues that music is illegal in Islam based on the following hadith:

«الْغِنَاءُ يُنْبِتُ النِّفَاقَ فِي الْقَلْبِ»

Which almost means: (Singing grows hypocrisy in the heart) (Hadith. Abi Dawwd. Kitab al-Adab: Bab Karahiat al-ghina' Wa al-Zamr: #4927).

Shakir goes further to argue that alluring and soft female voice is prohibited in the noble Qur'an. Allah (SWT) says:

{فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ وَقُلْنَ قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوفًا}

Which almost means: {Then do not be soft in speech [to men], lest he in whose heart is disease should covet, but speak with appropriate speech} (al-Qur'an, 33: 32).

The female voice is included in the category of *satr* i.e. it has to be concealed (Shakir, n.d.). According to Shakir, women in revealing clothes sing openly on television which is the cause of forbidding watching television. Nudity, romances, serials and other programs of television share the reason of prohibition.

Furthermore, some researchers consider television *haram* due to its impact. Al-Turayqu (n.d.) argues that the most prominent reason for those who prohibit television is that it is not primarily aimed at spreading virtue and proclaiming the word of Allah. Rather it is established for an unworthy purpose and no matter how much people's aims may vary, they are almost all engaging in one thing which is unacceptable and idle entertainment. Being established for unworthy purposes, evil of television overcomes its good. According to Mustafa Kanakir (2003: 231), this issue leads some scholars and Muslims who follow them to prohibit television based on the following verse. Allah (SWT) says:

{يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنْفَاعٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِثْمُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ مِنْ نَفْعِهِمَا}.

Which almost means: {They ask you about wine and gambling. Say, "In them is great sin and [yet, some] benefit for people. But their sin is greater than their benefit."} (al-Qur'an, 2: 219).

Based on *Qias* (analogical deduction of Islamic law) watching television is not allowed because its sin is greater than benefit. However, to others this *Qias* cannot be applied because unlike television sins of wine are rooted in its nature and cannot be eliminated except by getting rid of it as a whole. In contrast, television impact can be controlled to be either positive or negative. Therefore, other scholars have a different view concerning television.

On the contrary, some writers argue that the means come under the same rulings as the ends. The means of doing something *haram* is also *haram*, and the means of doing something obligatory is also obligatory (al-Turayqi, n.d.). Al-Qurafi (1998: 60) discusses

that the means that leads to something *haram* may not be *haram* in itself if it serves preferred advantage like ransoming Muslims by paying money to non-Muslims. Mass media are interpreted similarly. They are permissible in and of themselves based on the fact that if they are used to spread truth, then no doubt that they are permissible (al-Turayqi: n.d.). Television and other means of communication, therefore, are neutral like a glass if it is filled with water; it is *halal* (permitted) to drink. It turns to *haram* if the same glass is filled with wine, and becomes *wajib* (religious obligation) when it is filled with medicine for the sick.

Accordingly different attitudes of Muslims toward television affect its utilization for dissemination of the Islamic message. Surveying broadcasting timetables of television during its early stage in some Muslim countries, it is noticeable that religious programs are infrequent. A study conducted by Boyd (1982: 21-182) on radio and television in eighteen Arab Muslim countries demonstrates that some of television stations in the Muslim communities begin and end their broadcasting by reciting verses from the noble Qur'an. Others like Sudan and Egypt focus more on religion by broadcasting one or two religious programs that make the total religious broadcasting about 60-70 minutes daily. Other countries like Jordan does not broadcast any religious programs even noble Qur'an recitation or *athan*. Other countries broadcast between 15 to 25 minutes a day like Bahrain and Morocco, and the percentage of religious programs of Algerian television is 4% out of total broadcasting.

Likewise, a study of Islamic television programs conducted by Buyong and Ismail who are lecturers at Islamic International University of Malaysia (2012: 19) on seven

television channels in Malaysia demonstrates that no major change takes place concerning Islamic programs. The researchers discover that Islamic programs in four channels are minority, and other two channels contain no Islamic programs at all. Only a single channel, al-Hijrah, is considered the Islamic television in the country broadcasts approximately 67% of Islamic programs. The percentages are clarified in the following Figure 2.1. Only 11% of TV 1 is Islamic, 4% of TV2 and 7% of TV3. NTV 7 and 8 TV have no Islamic programs at all. TV 9 has a larger amount of Islamic programs estimated 23%, and al-Hijrah as mentioned above is 67%.

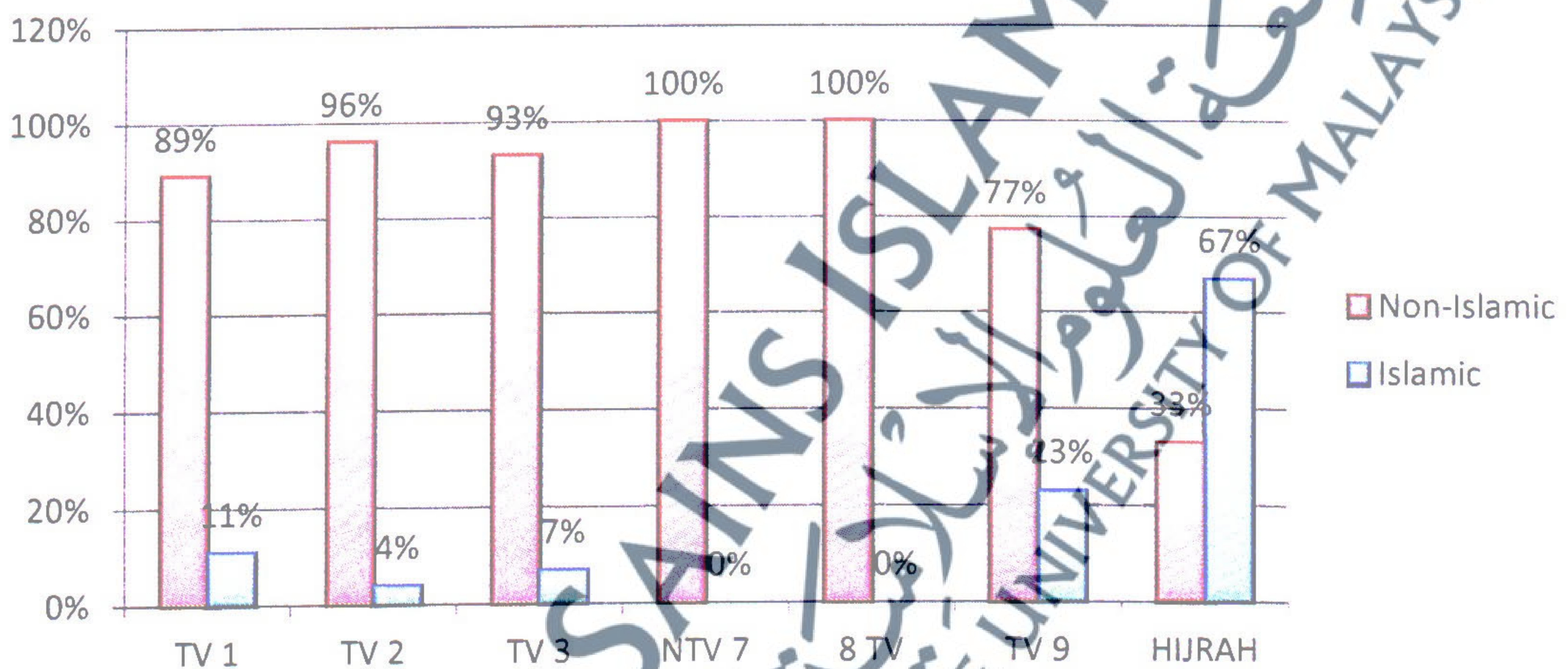


Figure 2.1: Programs of seven free-to-air Malaysian television channels

2.4 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF TELEVISION IN MUSLIM SOCIETY

Mass communication as a field of knowledge is discussed by Muslims prior to the invention of mass media by non-Muslims. Mass communication is applied to the Muslim society through divine-human communication. According to Davies (1987: 168) the word 'broadcast' simply means to disseminate widely. She (1987: 170) also argues that the concept of *al-nas* in the noble Qur'an involves that Muslims are mass communities. Mass

communities require mass media to communicate. To this end, the establishment of book writing and print in Muslim communities can be traced back to the time of Caliph Uthman Bin Affan (RAA) when the collection on the noble Qur'an in a book was completed. Book writing and print have undergone a process of development until it reaches papers and printers known today. However, Muslims in the modern age are lagging behind in the invention of modern technologies and mass media.

According to Wilt (n.d.) "the birth of the electronic television age is almost impossible to pinpoint exactly. Due to the numerous contributors that helped to develop this new medium, it is even more difficult to acknowledge any one person for its invention." Being producers, western manufacturers export television stations, sets and experts to non-producer countries. Al-Qudat (1994: 16) argues that television broadcasting in Muslim countries begins in the mid of twentieth century. Broadcasting technology in the Muslim World as Boyd argues is purchased from non-Muslim countries. He states:

"Virtually all television stations in the Arab world were purchased from and installed by West European and American equipment manufacturers: usually the installation agreement called for production training of the buyers by western experts, or for their training in the country where the equipment was manufactured" (1982: 9).

Importing television from non-Muslim manufacturers appears to have negative impact beyond transferring money of Muslims to non-Muslims.

The consequences of purchasing broadcasting technology from the West are not limited to hardware, but it exceeds to software too. Television in Muslim societies has a predominantly western style because it was invented and installed by the West (Boyd, 1982: 9). Al-Qudat (1994: 16) argues that the first television broadcasting in the Muslim

Arab World was in Dhahran, a city in Saudi Arabia, in 1947 where a station was established mainly for economic reasons and entertainment of Americans, foreign personnel and their families working in Arabic American Company (ARAMCO) Company. Henceforth, television extends to other Muslim communities. Even half a century after introducing television in Arab countries, television programs are affected by western programs. Rugh who is an editorial board member of Arab Media and Society journal argues that some television programs in Muslim communities are copied from the west. He (2007:15) states: “echoes of American debate programs in Aljazeera’s contentious discussion shows, and Arab reality shows, especially those that involve viewer voting such as Super Star and Star Academy, have taken format ideas from the West”.

Conversely, some Muslim countries at early stage of television attempt to overcome the western trend of television by setting guidelines for monitoring imported television programs. Shobaili (1971: 242-243) argues that in all gulf countries and more strictly in Saudi Arabia at early stage of television, a set of ten guidelines of broadcasting were applied to television and radio. The guidelines were: First, all scenes that rouse sexual excitement of whatever kind are prohibited. Second, women shall not appear indecently dressed nor may they dance, or appear in overt love scenes with men. Third, women are by no means allowed to appear in athletic games or sports. Fourth, alcoholic drinks and anything having to do with them shall not appear in films. Fifth, no downgrading reference whether explicit or implicit should be made to any of the Heavenly Religions. Sixth, other countries may not be treated with praise, satire or contempt. Seventh, anything relating to Zionism or any activity practices by Zionists is by no means allowed

to appear in these films. Eighth, all material meant to expose monarchy is absolutely prohibited. Ninth, on the whole all immoral scenes are prohibited. Tenth, everything considered as betting or gambling is utterly forbidden.

These guidelines later appear to be unable to stand the sweeping trend of western influence. The strict guidelines have declined gradually in most Muslim countries. Women without head scarf became acceptable to portray on television. Then, the famous Egyptian expression *al-jumhur 'awiz kidah* (Audience desires this) prevails. This expression becomes a justification for prohibited scenes. At a later stage, the concept 'freedom of expression' takes place which becomes an excuse to all that is prohibited. Viewing television in Muslim countries nowadays reveals the fact that filtering process of programs is almost disappeared. It is unquestionable to television viewers nowadays that indecent scenes in foreign and local television programs are frequent and to a large extent undenounced.

Moreover, television in Muslim countries is basically entertainment oriented. According to Buyong and Ismail (2012: 1) "television must provide information and entertainment", but a study of media habits of Egyptian gatekeepers, television is mentioned often as a source of entertainment rather than information (Boyd and Kushner 1979: 109). Buyong and Ismail (2012: 1) state, "Television has changed throughout the years, from the classic family sitcoms, with the wholesome commercials during the break, to overpopulate reality shows and random commercials...Many channels have deviated from their original programming focus throughout the years as well due to government policies".

In addition, at early stage of introducing television; no clear policy of broadcasting in most of Muslim countries was implemented. Even few countries that attempted to adhere to already established policies, commitment to a specific timetable is not achieved precisely. Boyd (1982: 94) noticed that “Although Jordan probably adheres more faithfully to its published television schedule than most other Arab television services, changes do occur almost daily”. News was a hindrance to broadcasting timetable commitment. “Although the times for various news services are published, the news does not always fill the scheduled period and is occasionally extended”, Boyd stated (1982: 95). Extension of news, most of the time, is due to political incidents or speeches of prominent political figures like presidents and ministers.

Besides, intrusion of governments in Islamic countries is not limited to news. Most of television stations in Muslim communities are controlled by government. According to Boyd (1982: xiii) “radio and television systems in the Arab World are operated directly by the government or indirectly through a government-sanctioned broadcasting organization”. Rugh (2007: 3) who has conducted a number of media studies in the Arab World states: “my research has consistently confirmed to me that the most important casual variable affecting the political role of mass media in each country is the underlying political system that prevails in that country. Other factors as geography turned out to be not very important”. Political relations also affect importing television programs. For example, when Egypt and Soviet Union commenced closer relationships to supply Egypt with military hardware and air defense system; Egyptian television broadcasted films about the new friend despite the disfavor of audience and broadcasters. Boyd (1982: 38) states: “there was no particular liking for such programs among television programmers,

but they were either free or inexpensive and pleased those whom Egyptian at the time believed to be its friends”.

Despite government control of television, the most dramatic changes in broadcasting have occurred in the past decade because of the emergence of satellite television (Rugh, 2007: 10). After introducing satellite television to Arab countries in 1990 (Sakr, 2002: 1) and eruption of a big number of television channels, the chances for governments in Muslim countries to control all aspects of television becomes harder. Yet, satellite television channels are subject to constraints imposed by political realities in each country. Even Aljazeera, the media outlet that tends most to break taboos and to criticize Arab governments, pays attention to the national political environment of its home country, Qatar (Rugh, 2007: 11). Governments began to control television through licensing. If a television channel does not fulfill the government rules, a license will not be granted; and consequently the channel stops. After the introduction of satellite, audiences obtain an increased opportunity to share and participate in television. However, some researchers tend to argue that such kind of participation is still limited. Moll (2010: 4), for example, argues that while satellite media may not be under direct control of the state, in many instances the industry players involved in setting them up have close personal and business ties to various political regimes. For instance, although Malaysian 8TV is established on the basis of free market competition, but what is more alarming is that the owner of 8TV is closely aligned to the ruling elite (Wahab, 2006: 4).

2.5 CHARACTERISTICS OF ISLAMIC TELEVISION PROGRAMS

The study of Islamic television programs has discovered that no specific policies for Islamic programs are implemented (Buyong and Ismail, 2012: 5). The importance of television programs lies in the mission they fulfill. Television programs are rich in values that are presented to the masses. High-valued television programs promulgate valuable messages that aim at spreading all kinds of good to human kinds, but junk messages waste audience's time and promote unethical messages. To promote valuable and ethical messages, the programs of Islamic television have specific characteristics. Among the important characteristics of television programs are reality and objectivity, comprehensiveness, moderation and application of Islamic distinctive features.

2.5.1 Reality and Objectivity

According to Cambridge dictionary (2003) the word 'reality' means "the state of things as they are, rather than as they are imagined to be". Objective as an adjective in the same dictionary means based on real facts and not influenced by personal beliefs or feelings. Bauer et al. (n.d.: 1) state "many theories on the media's role in society have been formulated, some of which have reflected a 'realistic approach' of telling how the world is. This is based on the assumption of an existing set of events, which can be reported 'objectively' and balanced by competent, fair and unbiased journalists. According to this realistic approach, journalism's role in society is seen to mirror reality." Reporters believe that objectivity and fairness means telling both sides of a story (Williams, 2003: 178), but real objectivity, to some writers, is not an easy task.

According to Tumber and Prentoulis (2003: 216) the structuring of information in an appropriate sequence and the criterion of common sense in assessing news content, whilst enabling the claim to objectivity (which functions as a shield from criticism), do not guarantee objectivity. In daily practice objectivity may not be achieved, and may not be a guiding principle (Bauer et al., n.d.: 2). A reason of absence of objectivity is explained by Siddiqui (1991: 485) who states “while a media producer can try as faithfully as possible to represent a reality, he/she can only present it as he/she sees it (i.e., it is subjective).” Other researchers go further to argue that not only affiliation to a specific nationality affects objectivity, but also the personality of the journalist has its role in determining reality and objectivity. For example, Bauer et al. (n.d.: 2) state “the ‘realistic approach’ is very much a normative stance, highlighting how journalists ought to report the world by appealing to the ethos of ‘objectivity’ as a self-regulatory professional standard.” Lack of objectivity also appears in presenting incidents out of context by focusing on a point and ignoring the total truth. The availability of shortcoming of objectivity and reality imposes following another concept that has no shortcomings. *Amanah* is an Islamic term that is more inclusive than objectivity and reality because it interferes in all aspects of life of human beings including news and television broadcasting.

Siddiqui (1991: 490) argues that broadcasting is controlled by business and industrial sector, but the fact that broadcasting should be based on a system of belief, attitudes and behaviours. *Amanah* is an Islamic term that is applied to ensure the wellbeing of television programs. According to Mowlana (2007: 31) the term *amanah* signifies great responsibility which Allah (SWT) imposes on human beings to maintain uprightness of their deeds. *Amanah* does not mean at all revealing the truth as it is because reveling truth

is sometimes *haram* if the truth is *ghibah* (backbiting), *namimah* (talebearing), spy or revealing secrets. Thus, the term *amanah* purifies objectivity and reality by protecting people's privacy. Privacy protection of persons and homes granted by Islam not only limits the broadcasting of private matters, but even prohibit it from being discussed (Davies: 186-187). Programs of Islamic television are *amanah* because it is devoted to reveal the message of Islam which Allah (SWT) entrusted Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to convey to *al-'alamin* (the worlds). In turn, presenters of this entrusted message are not authorized to interfere or amend it because they are not but entrusted personalities to convey impartial programs. The implication of *amanah* denies inviting people to Islam by force or temptation. Kahil (1985: 51) indicates that revealing true Islam is not similar to missionary organizations that offer gifts and money impressing people to convert to a specific religion.

Furthermore, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) practices *amanah* in dissemination of the message of Islam by conveying all revelations exactly as they are even if they include a friendly reproach to the Prophet himself. This kind of reproaches is not out of a mistake, but Allah (SWT) wants his Prophet to be the complete human being due to his high position. The noble Qur'an has some examples of friendly reproach of the Prophet. For example, in the beginning of *Abasa* chapter Allah (SWT) says:

{عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّى، أَنْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمَى، وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّهُ يَزْغَى، أَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنْفَعَهُ الذِّكْرَى، أَمَّا مَنْ اسْتَعْزَى، فَأَنْتَ لَهُ تَصَدَّى، وَمَا عَلَيْكَ أَلَّا يَزْغَى، وَأَمَّا مَنْ جَاءَكَ يَسْعَى، وَهُوَ يَخْشَى، فَأَنْتَ عَنْهُ تَلَهَّى، كَلَّا إِنَّهَا تَذِكْرَةٌ}.

Which almost means: {He [i.e., the Prophet] frowned and turned away. Because there came to him the blind man [interrupting]. But what would make you perceive, [O Muhammad], that perhaps he might be purified. Or be reminded and the remembrance would benefit him? As for he who thinks himself without need. To him you give attention. And not upon you [is any blame] if he will not be purified. But as for he who came to you striving [for knowledge]. While he fears [Allah]. From him you are distracted. No! Indeed, they [i.e., these verses] are a reminder} (al-Qur'an 80: 1-11).

Amanah is not only applied to the Prophet himself (PBUH), but all Muslims have to apply *amanah* to their interaction and communicating.

In addition, every Muslim is required to tell truth even it is against himself or his thought. Allah (SWT) clarifies that in the noble Qur'an by saying:

{يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ}.

Which almost means: {O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives} (al-Qur'an, 4: 135).

Therefore, *amanah* in Islam refines reality and objectivity because it purifies them by protecting the rights of others through prevention of *ghibah*, *namimah*, spy and revealing secrets. *Amanah* can be achieved through consistence and capability of following Allah's revelation (Siddiqui, 1991: 487). Thus, *amanah* of television programs is to present truth as it is, whether in news or any other programs, even it is against one's own belief or attitude making sure that this truth does not have the elements of *haram* or *makruh* (disapproved).

2.5.2 Comprehensiveness

According to Zulkiple (2006: 29) programs output must be comprehensive and encompass Islam in its entirety as no secularization is recognized by Islam. The programs of Islamic television are supposed to be comprehensive that tackle all matters related both to this life and the hereafter because Islamic television represents Islam which is a perfect religion. Allah (SWT) says in the noble Qur'an:

{الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا}.

Which almost means: {This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion} (al-Qur'an 5: 3).

Islam is not enclosed on itself like Judaism, nor prefers a specific race upon another like Nazism. Instead the message of Islam is comprehensive not confined to a specific class, group or race (al-Zuhaili, 1995: 20). Mustafa Kanakir (2003: 152-153), argues that comprehensiveness of Islamic message in the noble Qur'an manifests in four aspects: place, time, dissemination and people.

First, comprehensiveness of place indicates that Islam is a message to *al-'alamin*. It "is not a geographically-bound entity" (Zulkiple, 2006: 23). The message of Islam is not limited to a specific geographical area. Allah (SWT) refers to this issue in the noble Qur'an when he says:

{وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مُبَارَكٌ مُصَدِّقُ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَلِتُنْذِرَ أُمَّ الْقُرَى وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا}.

Which almost means: {And this is a Book which We have sent down, blessed and confirming what was before it, that you may warn the Mother of Cities [i.e., Mecca] and those around it} (al-Qur'an 6: 92).

The center of Islamic message at the time is Mecca. Therefore Allah (SWT) mentions Mecca with cities around it which refers to the entire world (Mutawi', 2002: 109). Thus, a net of satellite television channels that broadcasts in different languages is imperative to deliver the message of Islam to the entire world.

Second, time comprehensiveness of the Islamic message begins since creation of human beings till their end because Islam is not secluded from previous religions. Instead, they are all one entity and the religion is Islam (surrender) to Allah (SWT) (Kamel, 1970: 8). The message of Islam is sent to the worlds unlike previous heavenly messages that were limited to a specific era (Mutawi', 2002: 101). Allah (SWT) clarifies this point in the noble Qur'an by saying:

{وَأَوْحِي إِلَيَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ لِأُنذِرْكُمْ بِهِ وَمَنْ بَلَغَ}

Which almost means: {And this Qur'an was revealed to me that I may warn you thereby and whomever it reaches} (al-Qur'an 6: 19).

Whomever it reaches implies the meaning as long as the noble Qur'an exists (Mustafa Kanakir, 2003, 152). Allah (SWT) promises to protect and preserve the noble Qur'an. Therefore, the noble Qur'an never vanishes because it is under the protection of Allah (SWT). This verse means that disseminating the Islamic message is not at the time of the Prophet (PBUH) only, but Muslims in all ages are imposed to disseminate it.

Third, comprehensiveness of the Islamic message in the noble Qur'an is clarified through its dissemination. The order of dissemination of Islam in the noble Qur'an is boundless. Allah (SWT) says:

{يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ، قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ}.

Which almost means: {O you who covers himself [with a garment]. Arise and warn} (al-Qur'an, 74: 1-2).

Allah (SWT) asserts on comprehensiveness of dissemination in the noble Qur'an through addressing repeatedly all human beings, not Muslims or believers only, to indicate that Islam is to them all because Allah (SWT) wants His creatures to be in a good situation even they do not believe in Him. See for example, (al-Qur'an, 2: 21), (al-Qur'an, 4: 170) and (al-Qur'an, 22: 1).

Fourth, comprehensiveness of people or audience is also clarified in the noble Qur'an. *Al-nas* are the object and audience of knowledge and information (Davies, 1987: 167). The message of Islam is to all. Allah (SWT) specifies the mission of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) by saying:

{وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ}

Which almost means: {And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds} (al-Qur'an 21: 107).

Similar to the Islamic message, programs of Islamic television should be suitable to different categories of audience such as, children, youth, the elderly, Muslims, non-Muslims etc. Achieving the element of comprehensiveness through television involves long time of hard work because it involves revealing the message in different languages and forms that suit each kind of audience like cartoon for children, films for the youth, and talk shows for the elderly.

Thus, dissemination of the message of Islam is not confined to a place, time or audience. Abu Haibah, the manager of the al-Resalah television channel in Cairo interviewed by

Wise (2006), states that the Islamic message itself is not limited to narration of the noble Qur'an or religious talk shows. All useful and sinless messages and information are considered Islamic unless they include *haram* or *makruh*. Thereby, the only two limitations of the Islamic message are *haram* and *makruh*. Similarly, programs of Islamic television are limited only to *haram* and *makruh*. Sharaf (1993: 39) indicates that at the time of achieving such inclusiveness, Islamic television becomes not only international channel but a humanitarian one which call not to Islamic unity but to human union.

A study of "*Content Analysis of Islamic Television Channels*" by Osama Kanaker (2010) discovered that Islamic television channels lack comprehensiveness in their presentation of Islam. Having surveyed the web for Islamic television channels, it is discovered that more than forty channels currently exist, and each of them has its own model of broadcasting (Zulkiple, 2012). Zulkiple further discusses that these different models of broadcasting cannot be rejected even their programs are not comprehensive. Lack of comprehensiveness of Islamic television programs appears to be due to lack of financial support, expertise and cooperation among existing television channels. This lack asserts the need for creating an international network of Islamic television channels that broadcasts in different languages to improve the messages of Islamic television broadcasting and guarantee its outcome.

2.5.3 Moderation

Moderate means "neither too much nor too little" (Longman dictionary, 1999: 283). Since it is neither too much nor too little, it also means in the middle. Usually the middle of everything is the best of it because it is far from its two extreme ends (al-Buti, 2003: 211).

Al-Buti also argues that this meaning of moderation can be applied to both concrete materials and abstract issues. For example, generosity is a center between miserliness and lavishness. Bravery is also a center amid cowardliness and heedlessness (Mustafa Kanakir, 2008: 45). Allah (SWT) describes the Muslim nation in the noble Qur'an by saying:

{وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا}

Which almost means: {And thus We have made you a median [i.e., just] community} (al-Qur'an 2: 143).

According to al-Termithi (1991: 49) the word *wasatan* in the verse means *adlan* (just). Justice of delivering Islamic messages is to present median and moderate programs. Therefore, moderation of delivering Islamic messages through television is an essential demand because if it is not achieved, moderation will be replaced by extremism.

According to Mustafa Kanakir (2003: 158) *ghulu* (extremism) can be both in action and belief. The extremism of belief impairs 'aqidah (faith). The extremism of action leads to improper worship and obedience. Both kinds of extremism lead to wretchedness in this life and the hereafter. Harm of extremism does not affect extremists only, but transcends to society (al-Zuhaili, 1992: 29). Moderation is a center between extremism and incompletion, but extremism is more dangerous than incompletion because the former disunite the Muslim *ummah* and the latter leads to *bid'ah* (heresy) (al-Kanhan and al-Fifi, 2012). Al-Kanhan and al-Fifi also argue that extremists think that they are doing right, therefore they are persistent. Unlike disobedient who know that they are incorrect, and

they may repent at the end (2012). Therefore, extremism in the noble Qur'an is forbidden.

Allah (SWT) says:

{قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا أَهْوَاءَ قَوْمٍ قَدْ ضَلُّوا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأَضَلُّوا كَثِيرًا وَضَلُّوا عَنْ سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ}.

Which almost means: {Say, "O People of the Scripture, do not exceed limits in your religion beyond the truth and do not follow the inclinations of a people who had gone astray before and misled many and have strayed from the soundness of the way."} (al-Qur'an, 5: 77).

In fact, the messages broadcast in the programs of Islamic television have to be moderate i.e. do not focus on *'aza'im* (firm wills) because it is intended for a large number of different audiences where not all of them have firm wills. Some audience cannot perform achieve long time worship or practice rites that require extra efforts due to illness or weakness of the body or *iman*. The wife of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) describes him as:

«مَا خَيْرَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَيْنَ أَمْرَيْنِ إِلَّا اخْتَارَ أَيْسَرَهُمَا مَا لَمْ يَأْتُمْ».

Which almost means: (Whenever the Prophet was given an option between two things, he used to select the easier of the two as long as it was not sinful) (Hadith. al-Bukhari. Kitab al-Hudud. Bab Iqamat al-Hudud Wa al-Intiqam Li Hurumati Allah: Juz' 8).

Following the example of the Prophet, who is the model for all Muslim broadcasters (Mustafa Kanakir, 2008: 2), requires the messages presented in the programs of Islamic television channels to be moderate. Consideration should also be taken into account concerning the fact that freedom of practicing Islam in Muslim countries is different from

non-Muslim ones, and capability of youth is different from the elderly. Also, people of weak *iman* (belief) are not committed to Islamic rules like those of strong *iman*.

Moreover, al-Oadah (n.d.: 1) argues that looking at Muslim history, it is noticeable that the problem of giving a practical expression to moderation is one of the difficulties that Muslim intellectuals had to wrestle with. He further argues that it is quite easy to see how this disagreement affects the field of Islamic work today because in spite of a widespread theoretical acceptance of moderation, attempts at giving it a practical expression sometimes lead to conflicting goals and actions. In fact, many Muslims fail to understand the concept of moderation correctly. Therefore, the concept of moderation has to be explained in details by specifying clear rules especially regarding disputed issues such as the “unsettled problem” of entertainment in television (Zulkiple, 2009: 1).

2.5.4 Islamic Distinctive Features

According to Mustafa Kanakir (2003: 159) each community apply its distinctive features to its media. Distinguishing features of a community are the social, cultural, and mainly religious norms that control the society. Communist media, for example, serve communism; and Christian media serves Christianity. Similarly, media in Muslim communities should serve Islam and follow the Islamic principles and norms to produce Islamic broadcasting. It is not meant by Islamic communication a newly-invented field, but it means applying Islamic distinctive features to broadcasting to suite the Muslim audience (Kahil, 1985: 19). Islamic television programs are not limited to *Shari'ah* issues such as reciting noble Qur'an and delivering sermons even these are parts of real Islam. Mustafa Kanakir (2003: 159) discusses that Islamic broadcasting is limited to *haram* and

makruh. All useful television programs are considered Islamic unless they include forbidden or detested scenes. For example, children care programs, useful fun, first aids, education, economy and documentaries are required in Islamic television.

Moreover, Islamic broadcasting is founded on principles, basics and comprehensive divine constitution that deals with all activities of human life which forms ethics, thoughts, behaviors and actions of Muslim personality (Mustafa Kanakir, 2003: 159). These ethics, thoughts, behaviors and actions are supposed to be broadcast on Islamic television through multiple formats of programs. These programs are not required to be full of religious indications, but the general Islamic features should be dominant in the program. Even programs that are produced to consolidate *iman* can be produced in the same way. The Islamic identity has to be dominant in television of Muslim communities. The Islamic salutation at the beginning and end of a program is not enough to Islamize a program, but there should be a connection between Islam and what is presented in the program even though the connection is not stated clearly. For example, a program about natural disasters like floods, earthquakes or tsunamis should present the reason and results of these disasters from Islamic point of view without stating directly the Islamic view such as admitting that the disasters are a punishment from Allah (SWT) and Muslims have to repent. The four characteristics mentioned above, namely reality and objectivity, comprehensiveness, moderation and application of Islamic distinctive features are mainly related to programs. Likewise, format of Islamic television programs has its important characteristics too.

2.6 FORMAT OF ISLAMIC TELEVISION PROGRAMS

The study of message and meaning of Muslim communication demonstrates that not only content that matters in Islamic television, but format is crucial too. Siddiqi (2005: 83) states, “Muslims have to strengthen both the “Form and Contents” for communicating their message.” The Islamic message in television has its independent form. Television programs should be attractive and presented in a variety of formats in order to attract a large number of audience. The greatest example of attractive format is the noble Qur’an. Its format is not only attractive, but miraculous too. The noble Qur’an includes stories that portray incidents miraculously where reciters and listeners can visualize the whole story. These stories form an abundant source for television production to communicate the message of Islam. Each story can be transformed into series, films or cartoons. Format of Islamic television programs is distinguished by its artistic production, vicarious messages, adapting the message to audience, and simplicity and frequency.

2.6.1 Artistic Production

According to Hasan (1990: 25) art in Islam is founded on Islamic principles that involve both heart and mind. Islam strongly connects between ethics and art. If art contradicts Islamic ethics, it is considered rejected. Therefore, the western art in the modern age is not accepted by many Muslims and described as *haram* because it contradicts Islamic ethics. As a result, it is circulated among Muslims that art is religiously forbidden and Muslims think that Islam prohibits art. However, the limitation of art in Islam is not confined. It only forbids what harms society and circulates corruption (Mustafa Kanakir, 2003: 165). The Islamic art includes all kinds of useful attraction as clarified in the following hadith. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

«إن الله جميلٌ يحبُّ الجمال».

Which almost means: (Verily, Allah is Graceful and He loves Grace) (Hadith, Muslim, Kitab al-Iman. Bab Tahrim al-Kibr Wabaianih: Juz' 1: #147).

The last, word in the above mentioned hadith, *al-Jamal*, also means beauty which is a noun. The usage of a noun not an adjective in Arabic is used to give sheer meaning i.e. to imply that all kinds of beauty and art are required unless they include *haram*. Art should manifest in style, language, and setting of the programs.

First, beauty and art should be the natural feature of the style of Islamic television programs. Entertainment is also required to refresh the audience from time to time. Unfortunately, art and entertainment undergo unsettled debate because Muslim scholars have different views regarding them. Zulkiple states:

“It has to be admitted that the most crucial problem of establishing Islamic media is to face the different opinions among Muslim scholars on entertainment’s issues. The legality of music, singing, drama, film and other aesthetic pleasures is always hotly debated but without any clear conclusion.” (2009: 54).

Antagonists of art and entertainment hold their view against art because of moral decadence portrayed by artists particularly on television through films, series, drama or variety shows (Zulkiple, 2009: 56). As a result, some Muslims try to isolate themselves and their families from those forms of art, but isolation as al-Faruqi notices is not effective. She states:

“With the prevalence of modern communication technology in every town and village, such attempted isolation is rarely if ever successful. Others meet the challenge by trying to prohibit all the sound arts, regardless of their characteristics. In such cases, the resulting artistic vacuum is inevitably filled by

non-Islamic forms of music, which invade the minds of the less thoroughly Islamized members of community – its youth.” (1986: 175-176).

Thereby, it is imperative to employ elements of beauty and art in the style of television programs, and apply it to its format in a way that does not contradict Islamic teachings.

Second, artistic production should be applied to the language of the programs. Islam accepts all forms of innovation and art except that contradict its law. Television production is not but art, and its main aim is to attract viewers. Islamic television programs are a result of cooperation among artists, producers, directors, linguists and religious personalities who are required to have an artistic sense of their own profession (Mustafa Kanakir, 2003: 167). Artistic format of television programs should be applied to both visual and audio portions. Language proficiency i.e. audio is fundamental for *da'wah* (invitation to Allah) workers (Chowdhury, 2005: 44). Thereby television programs should be eloquent, simple and easy to understand by public audience even if the topic of the program is about space, economy or technology which requires professional audience to understand. Attraction of words and language is explained by the Prophet himself (PBUH) by saying:

«إِنَّ مِنَ الْبَيَانِ سِحْرًا».

Which almost means: (Some eloquent speech has the influence of magic) (Hadith. al-Bukhari. Kitab al-Nikah. Bab al-Khutbah: Juz' 7. P.19).

Eloquence was an important art at the time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) because it was common among people of the time, and the noble Qur'an which at the beginning was sent to them is distinguished of its eloquence.

Third, artistic production of television programs should be applied to their settings. Television is an image in the first place that is combined harmoniously with sound to produce an art (Mu'awid, n.d.: 87). Siddiqi (2005: 85), argues that training of workers in the art and science of broadcasting is a must. Therefore, attention should be paid to scenes, settings, décor and accessories where nature can be a helpful source for creating artistic video where fine colors and comfortable scenes for the eye are available. Mu'awid (n.d.: 73) indicates that décor and accessories are important for producing artistic television programs. The former is responsible for adequacy of location to topic, and the function of latter is to add extra artistic elements that improve the scene. As a consequence, artistic format of Islamic television is imperative to catch the attention of audiences. Preliminary efforts have been spent to develop the format of Islamic television programs, but the need for development remains (Mustafa Kanakin, 2003: 168).

2.6.2 Delivering Vicarious Messages

According to Chowdhury (2005: 28) communicating the message of Islam may materialize in different frontiers including non-verbal communication i.e. through Islamic character adopting innumerable avenues ranging from print media to online media and audiovisual channels. Kahil (1985: 93) discusses that Islamic *da'wah* must not be in any form of propaganda or embarrassing people to convert to Islam. Therefore, communicating the message of Islam through television should not demonstrate any form of compulsion because the function of television is to impart not to impose (Chowdhury, 2005: 31). Television is an appropriate medium for disseminating Islam through vicarious messages. A documentary, for example, that presents the greatness of the Creator (SWT) through presentation of his creation is a vicarious *da'wah* to Islam where audience feels

the greatness of Allah (SWT) and surrenders to Him. Even audience loves and adore the Creator (SWT) by watching such programs (Mustafa Kanakir, 2003: 170). Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has exploited vicarious messages in his *da'wah*. He (PBUH) focused on presenting Islam through his character. Even when the Prophet (PBUH) wants to correct a mistake or deliver a public sermon to his audience, which is a state similar to television that broadcasts to a large audience; He usually delivers his sermons unstraightforward by preventing himself from mentioning names of people who commit a mistake. He produces general statements to benefit and respect all his audience and ensures acceptance of the sermon.

Likewise, delivering Islamic through vicarious message can be applied to television. Presenting vicarious messages through television means to present Islam through films, serials, cartoons, competitions, etc. where sermons and messages are presented in the actions of the hero and other characters (Mustafa Kanakir, 2003: 171). Religious television programs should include the elements of information, drama, film, arts and discussions that portray positive values of the Islamic teaching itself (Sabran, 2010: 95). The main target of Islamic television programs is *da'wah*, and *da'wah* through television can attain its aims through applying circuitous form of teaching no need for confrontation or asking people directly to convert to Islam ('Azuzi, 2001: 40). Presenting the magnificent and miraculous aspects of Islam is enough. Mustafa Kanakir (2003: 170) indicates that vicarious presentation of Islamic television messages is suitable for three groups of audience: non-Muslims, new Muslims and Muslims whose belief is weak, whereas straightforward presentation is more suitable for Muslims who have strong belief

which can be accomplished through talks, sermons and preaching. Vicarious messages of teaching Islam can be achieved through 'edutainment' and 'infotainment'.

According to Carlson (2012: 17) edutainment is an approach to educating a person using entertainment as a pedagogical tool. Infotainment is also an approach to inform through entertainment. However, others identify infotainment as the use of information as a tool in the trade of entertainment (Carlson, 2012: 15). Carlson further stresses that infotainment is different from edutainment where the primary thrust would be to inform the audience using entertainment elements. Islam discourages wasting time. Therefore, entertainment should be purposeful not merely for fun. Okan (2003: 255) stresses that the purpose of edutainment is to attract and hold the attention of the learners by engaging their emotions through vividly colored animations. Edutainment can be achieved through employing technologies not originally intended for learning (Wheeler, 2009: 432). Television as a medium of entertainment and education is apt for edutainment and infotainment. Carlson (2012: 86) argues that edutainment does and have drawn primarily from drama, documentaries, and reality television, though the tactics of comedy are certainly employed and soap operas were a home for edutainment programs though the format itself is rarely invoked to create original material. Thus, all attractive formats of television programs such as edutainment and infotainment are strongly recommended for the dissemination of the Islamic message through television.

2.6.3 Adapting the Message to Audience

According to Chowdhury (2005: 49) it is incumbent on *da'wah* workers to gain an in-depth understanding of the target audience's outlook on life in general and religion in

particular prior to proselytization. The noble Qur'an was descended in a period of twenty three years. It is common that revelation of the noble Qur'an sometimes comes to answer a question, to comment on an issue, to give a verdict about an incident or to correct news. As a result, an independent field of knowledge called *Asbab al-Nuzul* (Reasons of Revelation) was developed (Mustafa Kanakir, 2003: 171). Prohibition of wine is an example presented in the noble Qur'an that considers adaption of time and audience for delivering this verdict. At early stage time is not appropriate to ban drinking alcohol. Allah (SWT) prepares it gradually and He bans alcohol completely when time is suitable. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) takes after the noble Qur'an. He sometimes ascends his pulpit at unusual times to comment on a current issue, and present the Islamic view regarding it.

Similarly, time, message and audience should be taken into account in the process of producing television programs because life keeps changing. The era of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is different in many aspects from the modern age. Therefore, some Muslim scholars before delivering a *fatwa* (Islamic legal opinion) regarding a specific incident ask whether it takes place. If it does not, they leave it to the scholar of the time (Mustafa Kanakir, 2003: 172). Considering audience differences is an important. For instance, television programs that suit American Muslim audience may not suit Arab ones, and programs for mature audience do not suit children. Likewise television programs that suit people of strong faith are not suitable for newly converted. Accordingly the programs of Islamic television should be produced wisely to achieve the expected impact. Programs should be broadcast after specifying time of broadcasting and target audience not vice versa in order to ensure adaption of programs to audience.

2.6.4 Simplicity and Frequency

According to Mustafa Kanakir (2003: 174) Islamic message is simple to comprehend. It is distinguished by its easiness and clarity of principles, rules, sources, aims, methods, ethics and rituals. Unlike other distorted religions, Islam is based on a simple and easily-understood testimony that is there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His messenger, (Mutawi', 2002: 39) which can be understood by educated, illiterate, young, old, males and females. Similarly, the programs of Islamic television should be apart from complexity to be understood by audience. Presenting Islam in a simple way contributes endearing it to audience. Endearing Islam to audience conforms to the following verse of the noble Qur'an. Allah (SWT) says:

{وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ}.

Which almost means: {Allah has endeared to you the faith and has made it pleasing in your hearts} (al-Qur'an 49: 7).

Dissemination of the Islamic message through attractive programs that portray visual examples is believed to ease the understanding of the Islamic message, and consequently increases the chances of accepting and adopting these examples.

In addition, frequency is a form of *da'wah* used by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and presented in the noble Qur'an in order to confirm understanding of the message and stress its importance. It is narrated by al-Bukhari describing the Prophet (PBUH):

«أنه كان إذا تكلم بكلمة أعادها ثلاثاً، حتى تفهم عنه».

Which almost means: (If the Prophet spoke a word (said a thing), he used to repeat it thrice so that the people could understand it properly from him) (Hadith. Al-Bukhari. Kitab al-'Ilm. Bab Man A'ada al-Hadith Thalathan Liyufhama Anh: Juz' 1. P.30).

This form was used by the Prophet (PBUH) when he wanted to propagate an important message like what happens when he headed toward Mecca before *Hudaibiah* reconciliation. The Prophet (PBUH) declared over and over that he was going for performing *umrah* (minor pilgrimage) not for war. Allah (SWR) in the noble Qur'an uses a word better than frequency which is 'reminding'. Allah (SWT) says:

{وَذَكِّرْ فَإِنَّ الذِّكْرَ تَنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ}

Which almost means: {And remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers} (al-Qur'an 51: 55).

Reminding or frequency of the Islamic message is important for rejecting prohibitions and confirming commandments of Islam because audience is in need of continuous encouragement. Frequency of television programs does not mean repeating the same programs until it is boring. Rather frequency of a message should be performed in a variety of formats. For example, an attractive talk show about fasting, a film that sheds light upon importance of fasting and a serial that presents the benefits of fasting and the advantages of fasters have a deeper impact on audience more than speeches only.

2.7 SOURCES OF ISLAMIC TELEVISION PROGRAMS

According to al-Malla (1981: 79) *Fiqh* (jurisprudence) contains two types of sources: essential sources that cannot be ignored, and *ijtihadi* (interpretative) sources that cope

with the changes of life. Islam is a way of life for its followers. It provides a set of sources of law to be followed. The essential sources are the noble Qur'an, Sunnah of the Prophet, *Ijma'* (consensus of Muslim scholars) and *Qias* (Mustafa Kanakir, 2003: 177). The interpretive source is *Ijtihad* (independent judgment or interpretation of Muslim scholars). These sources are to legalize what is *wajib* (required), *haram*, *mandub* (recommended), *makruh* or *mubah* (merely permitted) (Zulkiple, 2012: 2). Sources of television programs are not limited to these sources. The important sources of television programs are the noble Qur'an, Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad, history and incidents of everyday life.

2.7.1 The Noble Qur'an

According to Ali (1996: 228) the noble Qur'an is the fountainhead and major source of guidance. The Qur'anic guidance encompasses all aspects of human life and provides general principles to be utilized in real life. The noble Qur'an is the sacred communicational message, the eternal miracle of Islam and the comprehensive constitution that organizes Muslim affairs, and it is the main source and reference of broadcasting (Muhi al-Deen, 1998: 60). Allah (SWT) proves that the noble Qur'an is the comprehensive constitution for all affairs of human beings by saying:

{وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تَبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ}

Which almost means: {And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things and as guidance and mercy and good tidings for the Muslims} (al-Qur'an 16: 89).

The noble Qur'an is a guide and an abundant source for producing television programs.

The noble Qur'an is the divine guidance for humanity to use observation, reason,

consciousness, reflection, insight, intellect, understanding and wisdom (Siddiqui, 1991: 487), and it is full of topics for Islamic television programs. The noble Qur'an clarifies everything without specifying deep details, and Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) explains the details.

2.7.2 Sunnah and Sirah of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

According to Hasnain (1988: 184-185) both the noble Qur'an and Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) delineates the principles and methods of broadcasting that are required for Muslim broadcasting. The noble Qur'an includes general rules of Islam, while much of Sunnah is concerned with explaining details of these rules (Alsiba'i, 1985: y). In this regard the noble Qur'an and Sunnah cannot be segregated since the latter explains the former as they constitute a firm unity. Allah (SWT) mentions the importance of Sunnah in the noble Qur'an by saying:

{يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنْ تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا}.

Which almost means: {O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is the best [way] and best in result} (al-Qur'an 4:59).

The life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is carefully documented in details which made it a plentiful supply for television programs by investigating the books of Sunnah and exploring incidents from them. al-Buti (1991: 24) argues that the Prophet biography is the main centre of history... because the first trustworthy documented history written by

Muslims writers is incidents of Sunnah. Importance and abundance of Sunnah incidents that are appropriate for teaching Islam through television make Sunnah an important source for Islamic television. Life of the Prophet can be presented in multiple formats like films, soap opera, talk show, competition, cartoon etc.

2.7.3 History

History refers to a previous era of human life. It includes many experiences that can be learnt from. History is full of authentically documented incidents that constitute a plentiful source for television such as stories of prophets and ancient nations. The noble Qur'an guides humans to learn from the experience of ancient nations. Allah (AWT) says:

{أَفَلَمْ يَهْدِ لَهُمْ كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِنَ الْقُرُونِ يَمْشُونَ فِي مَسَاكِينِهِمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي النُّهَى}.

Which almost means: {Then, has it not become clear to them how many generations We destroyed before them as they walk among their dwellings? Indeed in that are signs for those of intelligence} (al-Qur'an 20:128).

An authentic source of documented history is the noble Qur'an which is full of historical stories. Historical stories of ancient nations in the noble Qur'an are not meant for fun or pleasure, rather for learning from them (Amarah, 1993: 121). Allah (SWT) confirms the importance of historical stories in the noble Qur'an by saying:

{لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ مَا كَانَ حَدِيثًا يُفْتَرَى وَلَكِنْ تَصْدِيقَ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيلَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ}.

Which almost means: {There was certainly in their stories a lesson for those of understanding. Never was it [i.e., the Qur'an] a narration invented but a confirmation of

what was before it and a detailed explanation of all things and guidance and mercy for a people who believe.} (al-Qur'an 12: 111).

According to Mustafa Kanakir (2007: 57-58), history is divided into Islamic and human, and both of them are sources for Islamic television programs. He divides Islamic history into three eras. They are: *al-khulafa' al-rashidun* (orthodox caliphates), *al-tabi'in* (followers of the Prophet companions) and *al-salaf* (the righteous predecessors). The history of these eras is full of stories of Prophet's companions and those who follow them. Lives of distinctive righteous Muslim scholars also form another source for television programs. Also experiences, books, inventions and knowledge of current and ancient humans whether Muslims and non-Muslims form another abundant source for television programs (Mustafa Kanakir, 2003: 180).

2.7.4 Incidents of Daily Life

Life is full of news, experiences and problems, and people are in need of learning how to handle them. According to Amarah (1993: 123) some media producers depend on books to produce television programs, but everyday activities are full of live incident that attract the audience's attention. For instance, the current international financial crisis is an opportunity to present the Islamic economic system as a solution which can be considered a universal victory for Islam. Inventions, international occasions, wars and daily news that form a source for television are originally come from incidents of daily life. The impact of these incidents becomes greater if broadcasters connect Islam to the incidents of everyday life demonstrating to the audience that Islam is the savior of their problems.

2.8 SUMMARY

Television at its early stage in some Muslim countries was to some extent committed to *Shari'ah*, but this commitment faded away gradually. Recently, the trend of commitment to *Shari'ah* again commenced to take place in the Muslim World, but it is limited to specific television channels that are described as Islamic. Looking back to the history of television in Muslim communities from an Islamic perspective, it can be concluded that *Shari'ah* commitment in television broadcasting was deteriorating except Islamic television channels that were introduced at the end of 1990s. The programs broadcast on Islamic television channels have to be Islamic in their content and format. The content should be presented with *amanah*. They also should be comprehensive, moderate and full of Islamic distinctive features. The format of Islamic television programs should be artistic, vicarious, adapted to audience and simple. The primary sources for these programs are the noble Qur'an, Sunnah and *sirah* (biography) of the Prophet, history and incidents of daily life.